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## The Pacific Sentinel, March 2017

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# *The Pacific* SENTINEL



# THE PACIFIC SENTINEL

## 04

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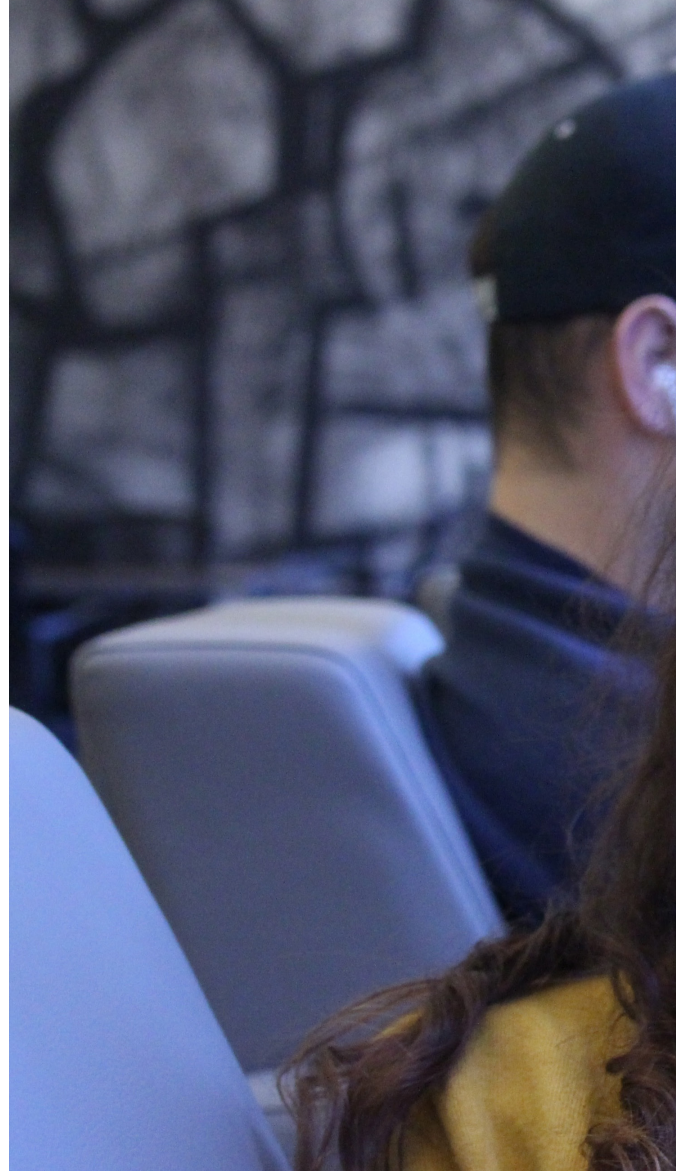
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## EDITORS NOTE

We'd like to apologize for the numerous typos in our February issue. We're constantly trying to improve the way we do things at *The Pacific Sentinel*, but we clearly missed the bar with last month's issue.

We'd also like to apologize for a factual error we printed: Donald Trump attended the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. We inaccurately reported that he attended Pennsylvania State, in our article "Sanctuary Campus."

We care very deeply about the issues we report on, and seek to do so in a professional, error-free, and factual manner.

Our apologies again, and thank you for reading,

—Alex Skousen





## WHO WE ARE

The Pacific Sentinel magazine offers an inclusive forum incorporating in-depth content from the PSU community. We advocate on behalf of the marginalized, explore the merits of cultural artifacts, and initiate interdisciplinary communication.

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# Senate Bill 540

## New Oregon Law Targets Student Protesters

by Taylor Shiells

A bill in Oregon's State Senate may threaten college students' rights to due process. The bill fundamentally changes the relationship between public schools and state government. Senate Bill 540, would mandate public colleges and community colleges to expel any student convicted of riot. While this bill could impact students who engage in future civil disobedience, the magnitude of that impact and its approach to school policy calls its legality into question.

The bill deals explicitly with the crime of riot, a class C felony which Oregon law defines as six or more people engaging "in tumultuous or violent conduct" that creates "a grave risk of causing public alarm." Other actions committed during a riot, such as larceny, arson, or assault, would not be addressed by Bill 540. The bill would mandate expulsion procedures against all students convicted of riot after its passage. Students with existing riot convictions would be unaffected.

At present a conviction for riot, or any other legal offense, is a violation of the student code of conduct at PSU. The same is true at most other public colleges. As such, a student convicted of riot could be expelled under current university policies. Under this law, however, schools would lose their power of discretion to consider individual cases.

The bill's sponsor, State Senator Kim Thatcher, a Republican representing the 13th district and a PSU alumnus, denies that the bill would have a negative effect on free speech. Rather, as she wrote in her statement to the Senate Committee on Education, the bill will protect student speech from "bad apples" who engage in violent behavior during otherwise peaceful protests.

Her comments deal with free speech, an issue which was largely decided when the Oregon Supreme Court ruled that the riot statute was not a violation of the First Amendment. What her arguments don't address, though, is the challenge the bill may face in the thorny legal field

of collegiate due process.

Under the Fourteenth Amendment, states are not allowed to "deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law". Under a series of legal decisions, starting with *Goss v. Lopez* (1975), the Supreme Court established that public education, including college education, is a core aspect to modern life. As such, no public student can be expelled without due process of law.

This protection is at the heart of the potential legal challenge to Bill 540. Currently, any given college in Oregon has procedures in place to evaluate violations of student conduct. These rules establish the rights that students have, in accordance with legal standards. These rights include the right to notice, the right to confront evidence, and the right to representation. Bill 540 would supplant those procedures with a state-imposed mandate: all convictions would result in expulsions.

Proponents of the bill could argue that due process exists in the criminal conviction, and that public colleges could still hold hearings. Without the discretion currently afforded to colleges, though, these would be formalities. They could examine only whether a conviction for riot existed and was valid. A student's life circumstances, the nature of their conviction, and their disciplinary history would all be irrelevant to the college's decision. Meanwhile, none of those factors would play into the determination of guilt in a criminal court.

While procedure is an element of due process, there is also the aspect of fairness. This concept, known as substantive due process, asserts that liberty cannot be taken unfairly or capriciously, even if a reliable legal process is used. This principle allows courts to overturn superficially fair laws that are used to circumvent civil rights.

The bill has yet to pass, and case law in Oregon has not

conclusively covered this situation. The arguments for the challenge, however, are strong. The bill would allow law enforcement to force an expulsion without considering the circumstances or interests of the student or the college. Allowing the state to deprive a right without even considering the interests behind that right is a violation of substantive due process, regardless of the procedure it did use.

Moreover, the bill chafes at another factor of substantive due process: the capacity for abuse. Arrests and convictions for riot are currently rare, even among arrests made during protests. Typically, this is because crimes draw from a common pool of punishments, and prosecutors therefore build a case based on the most clearly provable crimes. Bill 540, however, would attach an exceptional punishment to a single charge among the many available.

Could law enforcement use this option maliciously when targeting students? On Feb. 20, 13 people in Portland were arrested by police in riot gear for participating at a President's Day rally. The actions prompted the Oregon chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union to ask the Portland Police to revise their response to protests, according to KGW.

Events such as these demonstrate a confrontational attitude that currently exists between law enforcement and protesters. From a legal perspective, if a noticeable increase in riot convictions occurred following the passage of Bill 540, that could be used as evidence of law enforcement using the law to arbitrarily target students.

Bill 540 is still in its earliest stages. At this point, discussion of its legal challenges, or even its chance of becoming law, is speculative. As proposed, though, its enforceability, motives, and potential for abuse are all questionable. For those who choose to organize and demonstrate, awareness of their rights and the law behind them will be key to navigating an increasingly hostile climate.

# TRUMP IN OFFICE

*a timeline since day one*

## **Jan. 20, 2017**

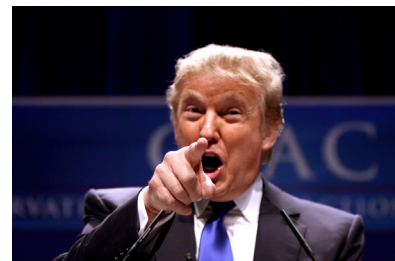
Donald Trump is inaugurated as the 45th president of the United States.

## **Jan. 20, 2017**

President Trump signs an executive order to freeze pending regulations until they are approved by his administration. This includes regulations put forth by President Obama in his final weeks of office, some of which deal with global climate change and energy efficiency.

## **Jan. 20, 2017**

President Trump signs an executive order to "minimize the economic burden of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act [ACA] pending repeal." Trump's administration has promised to "repeal and replace" the ACA, but have not yet released a plan to replace the health care law.



## **Jan. 21, 2017**

The Women's March on Washington takes place, with an estimated 3,600,000 - 4,600,000 people participating worldwide.





# Game On!

Voices in Video Games Speak out for Themselves

*by Jeremy King*

On Oct. 21, 2016, the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, or SAG-AFTRA, called for a strike against a number of high-profile companies such as Electronic Arts, Insomniac Games, Take-Two Interactive Software, and more on behalf of voiceover artists active within the video game industry. It is now the second longest-running strike in the guild's history, following a strike in 2000 leveled against the advertising industry that called for improved work compensation for commercial work in basic cable and

internet services.

The current strike, which follows an "...unsuccessful 19 months of negotiations after the existing labor contract known as the Interactive Media Agreement expired in late 2014," Iman Smith of NPR reports, features a slew of similar demands, with improved work conditions and residual payments at the center.

The existing terms dictate that voice actors within the guild



*Fallout 4 Screenshot // Jeremy King*

receive a fixed rate of “...about \$825 for a standard four-hour vocal session,” Smith reports. “So the voice actors are pushing for the idea of secondary compensation — a performance bonus every time a game sells 2 million copies or downloads, or reaches 2 million unique subscribers, with a cap at 8 million.”

Other areas the union calls for improvement in include increased transparency between the industry and voiceover talent and less strenuous working conditions.

“I was a main character in ‘Fallout 4,’ a character by the name of Kellogg, and I never knew that I was working on ‘Fallout 4’ throughout the year and a half that I did vocal recording for that game,” Keythe Farley, a voiceover artist who chairs the SAG-AFTRA negotiating committee, told Smith. “You show up

### **Jan. 22, 2017**

After Press Secretary Sean Spicer’s claim that “this was the largest audience to ever witness an inauguration, period” was proved false, Kellyanne Conway claimed Spicer employed “alternative facts.”

### **Jan. 23, 2017**

President Trump signs an executive order to reinstate “The Mexico City Policy,” removing federal funding from organizations that “support or participate” in abortion, such as Planned Parenthood. Abortions have not been federally funded since the 1976 Hyde Amendment, except in cases of rape, incest, or life-threatening pregnancy.

### **Jan. 23, 2017**

President Trump signs a memorandum to withdraw the US from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The TPP was never ratified, and cannot currently be ratified due to US withdrawal.

### **Jan. 23, 2017**

President Trump signs a memorandum ordering a federal hiring freeze on the executive branch, including vacant jobs that existed at noon on Jan. 22. This does not apply to military personnel. This memorandum will expire once the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) determines and implements a long-term plan to “reduce the size of the federal government’s workforce.”

### **Jan. 24, 2017**

President Trump signs memorandums reviving construction of the Keystone XL pipeline and the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL).



[and] there's a stack of scripts on a music stand with your lines only."

Safety concerns, meanwhile, largely pertain to the vocal stress many voice actors contend with.

"I have friends who have had to have surgery because of the vocal stress they incurred in the session and they've been out of work for months," voice actress Jennifer Hale told NPR, referencing some of the more demanding expectations of video game voiceover work—like the sound a voiceover artist may be required to approximate when "slashed in half by a sword" or "struck in the heart by a bullet."

Scott Witlin, the lawyer representing the companies targeted by the strike, stated that to pay the voiceover artists working within the gaming industry under the newly proposed terms wouldn't work because they "...represent less than one tenth of one percent of the work that goes into making a video game," NPR reports.

"[Paying] them under a vastly different system than the people who do the 99.9 percent of the work [will] create far more problems for the video game companies," Witlin said.

Expanding upon this sentiment, Emanuel Maiberg, in an article for *Motherboard*, states that "...the game developers, voice actors, and labor scholars who study the game industry" are less concerned with the voice actors currently on strike as they are with game developers "...and the lessons they might be learning from the organized workers" they see pushing for improved working conditions.

"Without a doubt, many game developers are paying attention to the SAG-AFTRA strike," Kate Edwards, executive director of the International Game Developers Association, or IGDA, told Maiberg, adding that the strike had brought about a "...resurgence in discussions around unionization beyond voice actors."

It stands to reason that the long-running strike would bring the issue of equity and representation within the industry to the forefront of the discussion.

"For many game [developers], the strike has raised fresh questions about unionization in the game industry," writes Alex Wawro, News Editor for *Gamasutra*.

During the 'crunch' time that frequently precedes a deadline, programmers working on a game may find



Fallout 4 Screenshot // Jeremy King



Fallout 4 Screenshot // Jeremy King

themselves “...working every day, 15-hour days” Tommy Tallarico, composer and founder of the Game Audio Network guild, told Maiberg.

For many game developers, the culture and pressure of the workplace is one that necessitates these extended crunch-time periods, with IGDA's 2015 Developer Satisfaction Survey revealing that “...62 percent [of respondents] indicated that their job involved crunch time; 58 percent said they were in crunch more than twice in the last two years; and 61 percent said that crunch time is expected at their workplace,” with an additional 44 percent of respondents who did not specifically cite experiencing periods of “crunch time” stating that “...their job did require periods of long hours, extended work hours or extended overtime that is not called ‘crunch.’”

“...and then a voice actor comes in and does a four-hour recording session and demands royalties on that game,” said Tallarico. “What if actors get royalties and the programmers don’t?”

The strike seems poised to pit not only game corporations and voice actors at odds, but developers, as well; according to chief SAG-AFTRA negotiator Ray Rodriguez, this shouldn’t be the case. Rather, he insists that the developers position may not be so different from the voice actors, and encourages unity in an effort to procure better working conditions from the corporations.

“The real question should be, why don’t the video game corporations want the developers to have better working conditions? To work less hours? To have work-life balance? To have better pay? To have job stability? We hope that developers recognize that and come together to protect their careers,” Rodriguez told reporter Ian Williams in an interview for Waypoint. “And when they do, we will stand with them and help them in any way we can.”

## Jan. 24, 2017

President Trump tweets, “if Chicago doesn’t fix the horrible ‘carnage’ going on... I will send in the Feds!” citing statistics previously heard on “The O’Reilly Factor” and echoing a sentiment from one of the guests on the show. This tweet was originally from Trump’s personal account, @realDonaldTrump, and retweeted to the @POTUS account.

## Jan. 25, 2017

President Trump signs an executive order mandating the construction of a wall along the United States/Mexico border. Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto has repeatedly reiterated that Mexico will not be paying for the wall, despite what President Trump has said.

## Jan. 26, 2017

Mexican President Peña Nieto cancels a meeting with President Trump after the latter signed an executive order mandating a border wall. The morning prior, Trump took to Twitter, stating that “if Mexico is unwilling to pay for the badly needed wall, then it would be better to cancel the upcoming meeting.”

## Jan. 27, 2017

President Trump signs an executive order denying entry to the United States from seven Muslim-majority countries. Refugee admissions are deferred for 120 days; Syrian refugees are banned indefinitely. There was confusion on whether or not the ban included permanent residents, green card holders, or visa holders.

## Jan. 27, 2017

Protests against President Trump’s travel ban begin in airports across the country as travelers are detained, with crowds in the thousands and immigration lawyers working pro-bono.



# Portland International

by Pacific Sentinel Staff



## One Week and A Day

After sitting shiva (a ritualistic mourning period in Judaism) for his recently deceased son ends, Eyal Spivak invites his neighbor's (whom he detests) son over to get high with him. Meanwhile Eyal's wife tries to get back to a normal routine, which includes preparing pop quizzes for her elementary school students, making her dentist appointment on time, and taking care of a pair of kittens recently birthed in their backyard. This heartwarming, often hilarious tale gives a unique perspective on what it means to grieve, and the contradictory moments of glee that can be felt during a hard time. The most memorable line: "My son is running around on the roof with a VCR player. It's time this stopped."

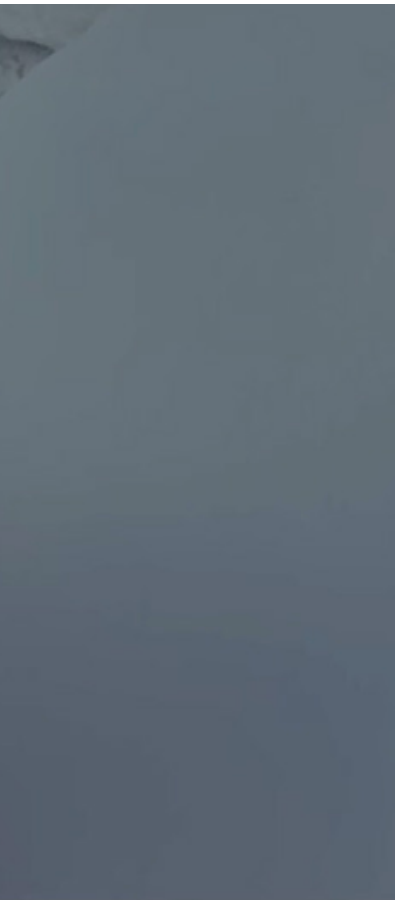
"One Week and A Day" played during the 40th Portland International Film Festival on Feb. 19, 2017 at Fox Tower Theatres. It was directed and written by Asaph Polonsky and stars: Sharon Alexander, Shai Avivi, and Evgenia Dodina. "One Week and A Day" has not received a content rating from the MPAA.

## Old Stone

A Chinese taxi driver, Lao Shi, is put to the ultimate moral test as one sloppy swerve of his wheel turns into a tragic automobile/ pedestrian accident. An average family man without many prospects finds himself suddenly handing out his family's money in order to appease the situation. Heartfelt altruism quickly turns into a sour and



# Film Festival



jaded revenge, creating an intense psychological thriller. Lao Shi is faced with a choice between overcoming bureaucratic opposition or succumbing to the iron-clad grip of legal manipulation.

“Old Stone” played during the 40th Portland International Film Festival on Feb. 22, 2017 at Valley Cinema, and Feb. 23, 2017 at Fox Tower Theatres. It was directed and written by Johnny Ma and stars: Gang Chen, Nai An, Hongwei Wang, and Zebin Zang. “Old Stone” has not received a content rating from the MPAA.

## **Maliglutit**

When a north Canadian Inuit tribe banishes several members for withholding food (among other things) the banished men return while two hunters are out stalking caribou. They kill the elderly and children, and kidnap the women, instigating pursuit when their crimes are discovered by the hunters. A taut and cinematically gorgeous film, shot on location in northern Canada. Based on the John Ford film “Searchers.”



*Maliglutit // Trailer Stills*

“Maliglutit” played during the 40th Portland International Film Festival on Feb. 21, 2017 at Valley Cinema and Feb. 23, 2017 at Laurelhurst Theatre. It was directed by Zacharias Kunuk and Natar Ungalaaq and was written by Norman Cohn and Zacharias Kunuk and stars: Benjamin Kunuk, Karen Ivalu, and Jonah Qunaq. “Maliglutit” has not received a content rating from the MPAA.

## **Jan. 27, 2017**

President Trump releases a statement for International Holocaust Remembrance Day, which is criticized for having no mention of the Jewish people or antisemitism. Trump aide, Hope Hicks, forwarded CNN a Huffington Post article describing others killed by the Nazis for their sexuality, political views, or ethnicity, and said, “we are an incredibly inclusive group and we took into account all of those who suffered.”

## **Jan. 28, 2017**

President Trump signs a memorandum reorganizing the National Security Council, giving Steve Bannon a permanent seat.

## **Jan. 28, 2017**

President Trump calls multiple foreign leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin and Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. In his call with Turnbull, Trump criticized an Obama-era deal in which the US pledged to take in 1,250 refugees from Australia as “the worst deal ever,” and then hung up 25 minutes into a scheduled hour-long call.



## **Jan. 30, 2017**

President Trump signs an executive order stating that for every new regulation the executive branch proposes, two other must be repealed.

## **Jan. 30, 2017**

President Trump fires attorney general Sally Yates after she instructed the Justice Department to not defend Trump’s travel ban.





*El Acompañante // Trailer Stills*

## El Acompañante

In a military-guarded sanatorium for HIV patients in 1988 Cuba, Daniel, an especially defiant but beloved patient, is assigned a “companion:” Horacio, an ex-boxing champion involved in a doping scandal. After contentious beginnings, the two eventually develop a friendship outlined by Horacio’s climb back into the boxing ring and the progression of Daniel’s HIV. The film is driven by the public misconceptions of HIV patients during the AIDS crisis, reminding viewers of mistakes not soon forgotten.

“El Acompañante” played at the 40th Portland International Film Festival at Fox Tower Theater on Feb. 19, 2017 and Feb. 21, 2017. It was directed by Pavel Giroud, written by Pavel Giroud, Alejandro Brugués, and Pierre Edelman, and stars Armando Miguel Gómez and Yotuel Romero. “El Acompañante” has not received a content rating from the MPAA.



## Portland International Film Festival Audience Awards

### Best Narrative Feature Winner

“Truman” / dir. Cesc Gay

### Runners Up

“Land of Mine” / dir. Martin Zandvliet

“Heidi” / dir. Alain Gsponer

“The Invisible Guest” / dir. Oriol Paulo

### Best Documentary Feature Winner

“I Am Not Your Negro” / dir. Raoul Peck

### Runners Up

“Obit” / dir. Vanessa Gould

“Abacus: Small Enough to Jail” / dir. Steve James

“Buzz One Four” / dir. Matt McCormick

### Best First Feature Winner

“My Life as a Zucchini” / dir. Claude Barras

### Runners Up

“Alive & Kicking” / dir. Susan Glatzer

“The World of Us” / dir. Ga-Eun Yoon

“The Land of the Enlightened” / dir. Pieter-Jan De Pue

### **Best Animated Feature**

#### **Winner**

"My Life as a Zucchini" / dir. Claude Barras

#### **Runners Up**

"Louise by the Shore" / dir. Jean-François Laguionie

"Window Horses" / dir. Ann Marie Fleming

"Revengeance" / dir. Bill Plympton, Jim Lujan

### **Best Short Film**

#### **Winner**

"Incendio" dir. Slater Dixon

#### **Runners Up**

"Thanks for Dancing" dir. Henrik Martin Dahlsbakken

"Paniek!" dir. Joost Lieuwma, Daan Velsink

"One, Two Tree" dir. Yulia Aronova

### **Best Oregon Short Film**

#### **Winner**

"Incendio" / dir. Slater Dixon

#### **Runners Up**

"The Child and the Dead" / dir. Karina & Marc Ripper

"Kuwepo" / dir. Jan Haaken

"Your Move" / dir. Rollyn Stafford

## **'Best Of**

### **Best of Masters**

"The Olive Tree" / dir. Icíar Bollaín

### **Best of PIFF After Dark**

"The Invisible Guest" / dir. Oriol Paulo

### **Best of Ways of Seeing**

"The Dreamed Ones" / dir. Ruth Beckermann

### **Best of Films for Families**

"Heidi" / dir. Alain Gsponer

### **Best of Global Panorama**

"Train Driver's Diary" / dir. Milos Radovic

## **Death in Sarajevo**

As a struggling hotel prepares to host an event commemorating the centennial of Franz Ferdinand's assassination, the staff plans to strike while the manager struggles to keep things together, relying heavily on his main receptionist. Meanwhile, a French diplomat practices a commemorative speech in his suite, a TV news journalist interviews people of vastly different ideologies on the roof, and the basement is rented out to gangsters. Scenes are composed of interesting shots with obvious artistic direction. "Death in Sarajevo" is an ambitious attempt at hosting multiple factions with radically different stories held together only by their time and place; a satirical look at Balkan conflict, though prior research may be needed to understand it.

"Death in Sarajevo" played at the 40th Portland International Film Festival at the Whitsell Auditorium on Feb. 24, 2017, and at Fox Tower Theater on Feb. 25, 2017. It was directed by Danis Tanović, written by Bernard-Henri Lévy and Danis Tanovic and stars Vedrana Seksan, Snežana Marković, Izudin Bajrović and Faketa Salihbegovic. "Death in Sarajevo" has not received a content rating from the MPAA.

## **Jan. 31, 2017**

President Trump nominates Neil Gorsuch to succeed Antonin Scalia on the Supreme Court. Multiple comparisons have been drawn between Gorsuch and Scalia, and Republicans praised the choice after refusing President Obama's nomination of Merrick Garland in 2016.

## **Feb. 2, 2017**

At the National Prayer Breakfast, President Trump promised to repeal the Johnson Amendment, which prohibits tax-exempt groups (such as religious organizations) from contributing to political campaigns. The president does not actually have the power to annul the amendment; only congress can repeal the law.

## **Feb. 3, 2017**

Federal Judge James Robart ordered a temporary nationwide halt on President Trump's travel ban.

## **Feb. 3, 2017**

President Trump signs an executive order calling for review of the Dodd-Frank Act, an Obama-era financial regulation on Wall Street signed in response to the 2007-2008 financial crisis, known especially for ending "too big to fail."

## **Feb. 3, 2017**

President Trump signs a memorandum stopping a federal rule that mandates financial advisors act in their client's best interest.

## **Feb. 4, 2017**

Airlines begin allowing travel for those previously affected by Trump's travel ban. Trump responded multiple times on Twitter, including a tweet which refers to Judge James Robart as a "so-called judge."

# Tappin' Feet

## at the PDX Jazz Festival

by Kimberlee Ponce



Ralph Peterson Triangular // Kimberlee Ponce

Jazz enthusiasts of all ages took their seats and settled in at Winningstad Theater for the Ralph Peterson Triangular show on Feb. 17, 2016. The crowd's excitement animated the already stunning cherry red theater. The room felt small and intimate, and had a particular buzz to it. A blurred chatter moved throughout the audience, a result of restlessness as they waited for the musicians to appear on stage. Ralph Peterson, the lead musician and drummer, led his trio that night as just one of the many talents in the 2017 Portland Jazz Festival.

"If we don't keep promoting jazz to the younger generation, it will die," said Kevin Hoover, the Volunteer Coordinator for PDX Jazz. Other audience members, like Marge and James Curtis, a couple from Berkeley, California, had different things to say. "I just enjoy—it makes me happy," said Marge. "It's everything—I dream jazz, I eat jazz, I play jazz," said James, who is a musician himself. Even while jazz held a different definition for everyone, one thing was the same—the music was a shared euphoria amongst the audience.

Ralph Peterson, whose namesake the Triangular takes its title after, quickly caught everyone's attention, as he suddenly appeared on stage in a bold pinstripe suit. He wore reflective round sunglasses, and instantly brightened the room with his gregarious introduction. He opened the night with a warm greeting, which was followed by spunky one-liners like, "Fasten your seat belts," "Put your trays in the upright position," and "We'll do the smoking," immediately making the audience erupt with giggles.

The whole audience paused with a brief yet noticeable silence until the clang and rhythm of Ralph's drumming filled every nook and cranny of the theater, creating warmth and depth within the



room. The cello player and pianist, Luques and Zaccai Curtis were so effortless as their fingers moved like spider legs, delicately yet deliberately plucking away. The three musicians simultaneously created different rhythms together, creating balance throughout their own improvisation; the perfect jazz balance of rebellion and deliberate strategy. Their shared looks and laughs on stage were undeniably contagious. One glance of the audience gave way to a room full of satisfied and reinvigorated people. Everyone seemed well-pleased. People were smiling, heads were nodding, and feet just couldn't stop tappin'.

**PDX Jazz Festival ran from Feb 16. to Feb. 26.**  
**Tickets and showtimes can be found [pdxjazz.com](http://pdxjazz.com).**



*Ralph Peterson // Kimberlee Ponce*

## **Feb. 7, 2017**

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell interrupted Sen. Elizabeth Warren's speech against confirming Jeff Sessions as Attorney General, saying that she "impugned the motives and conduct" of Sessions. Republicans then voted to formally silence Sen. Warren. McConnell further defended this, stating: "Sen. Warren was giving a lengthy speech. She had appeared to violate the rule. She was warned. She was given an explanation. Nevertheless, she persisted."

## **Feb. 7, 2017**

Betsy Devos is confirmed as Secretary of Education after Vice President Mike Pence cast an unusual tie-breaking vote, bringing the end vote to 51-50.

## **Feb. 8, 2017**

Jeff Sessions is confirmed as Attorney General in a 52-47 vote, following controversy surrounding Session's previous comments on race and his prosecution of a 1985 voter fraud case against black civil rights activists. Many Democrats spoke out against Session's nomination, including Sen. Elizabeth Warren, Rep. John Lewis, and Sen. Cory Booker, who broke senate tradition by testifying against another senator.

## **Feb. 8, 2017**

After Nordstrom announced they would no longer sell Ivanka Trump's clothing line, citing poor sales, President Trump tweeted from the @realDonaldTrump account, "Ivanka has been treated so unfairly by Nordstrom." This tweet was then retweeted to the @POTUS account, sparking controversy over whether the president was using the account to promote personal family interests.



Flickr // Wikicommons

# Apple Invests in Artificial Intelligence

by Jeremy King

"Apple Inc. will allow its artificial intelligence teams to publish research papers for the first time," reported Alex Webb of *Bloomberg* on Dec. 6, 2016, adding that the move "[marked] a significant change in strategy that could help accelerate the iPhone maker's advances in deep learning."

Apple's initial announcement came as a surprise to many. The company had previously maintained staunchly insular policies regarding information pertaining to A.I

tech development -- and their progress within the field suffered as a result.

"There's no way they can just observe and not be part of the community and take advantage of what is going on," Yoshua Bengio, professor of Computer Science at the University of Montreal, told *Bloomberg*. "I believe if they don't change their attitude, they will stay behind."

Following the December 2016 announcement, Apple has demonstrated unprecedented transparency in its



revitalized foray into the field of artificial intelligence, beginning with a research paper published Dec. 25, 2016.

“Six researchers from the company’s recently formed machine learning group published a paper that describes a novel method for simulated [and] unsupervised learning,” John Mannes, writer for TechCrunch, reported on Dec. 26, 2016. “The aim is to improve the quality of synthetic training images. The work is a sign of the company’s aspirations to become a more visible leader in the ever growing field of AI.”

Machine learning, a form of computer science, allows for computers to react, adapt, learn, and make predictions based on data-driven algorithms instead of being ‘locked’ into following a set of programmed instructions. In a nutshell, it allows the computer to think outside the box.

Various models of machine learning exist; more common applications include data-driven, informational models that operate at the heart of email spam filters, while other modes serve a fundamental function within many of our most utilized social media platforms, search engines, and more.

“Facebook’s News Feed uses machine learning to personalize each member’s feed,” writes Margaret Rouse of TechTarget. “If a member frequently stops scrolling in order to read or ‘like’ a particular friend’s posts, the News Feed will start to show more of that friend’s activity earlier in the feed.”

Put plainly, it all boils down to pattern recognition and, subsequently, adaptation.

“Behind the scenes, the software is simply using statistical analysis and predictive analytics to identify patterns in the user’s data and use to patterns to populate the News Feed,” writes Rouse.

But Apple’s deep dive into the realm of machine learning suggests larger ambitions than social media analytics. While the company’s research is still in the early stages, it’s clear that Apple has stepped up to the plate in a major way.

On Jan. 27, 2017, Apple officially joined the Partnership on AI; a non-profit organization dedicated to researching the field of artificial intelligence. Other members of the group include fellow tech industry giants such as Facebook, Amazon, Google, IBM, and more.

More recently, Apple announced plans to expand upon its existing presence in Seattle’s Two Union Square tower, where the company already occupies two floors.

“In many ways, the tech world’s AI arms race is really a fight for talent.

## **Feb. 9, 2017**

President Trump tweets “SEE YOU IN COURT!” [sic] after the 9th Circuit Court unanimously ruled to not to reinstate the travel ban for now. Trump’s administration has suggested they are looking into other ways to get a travel ban implemented.

## **Feb 13, 2017**

Mike Flynn, Trump’s National Security Advisor, resigns after a report in the *Washington Post* stated that he had discussed sanctions with Russian ambassadors. In his resignation, Flynn says he “inadvertently briefed the vice president-elect and others with incomplete information regarding [his] phone calls with the Russian ambassador.”

## **Feb. 14, 2017**

Press Secretary Sean Spicer claims that the president fired Mike Flynn as national security advisor, in contrast with previous reports of his resignation.

## **Feb. 14, 2017**

Senior Advisor Kellyanne Conway appears on “Fox and Friends” and tells viewers to “go buy Ivanka’s stuff,” referencing Nordstrom’s recent decision to drop Ivanka Trump’s clothing label. The Office of Government Ethics Director, Walter Shaub Jr. calls for an investigation and potential disciplinary action be taken against her for violating the Standards of Conduct.

## **Feb. 15, 2017**

The Senate votes 57-43 to repeal an Obama-era regulation designed to keep severely mentally ill people from purchasing firearms. President Trump must sign the measure before the regulation is officially rolled back, and he is widely expected to do so.



Skilled engineers are in short supply, and Silicon Valley's biggest companies are competing to nab the best minds from academia and rival firms," writes James Vincent of The Verge. "Which is why it makes sense that Apple has announced it's expanding its offices in Seattle, where much of its AI and machine learning work is done."

In an interview with Geekwire, Carlos Guestrin, Apple's director of machine learning, "...was ambiguous about Apple's plans for AI and machine learning technology, but spoke about making people 'emotionally connected' to devices like iPhones through how much they understand their users and make relevant predictions," Todd Bishop reports. "The Seattle team is said to be doing a mix of short- and long-term research, developing features for upcoming products as well as working on concepts that are 3 to 10 years out."

The flurry of activity has demonstrated Apple's newfound commitment to openness regarding its research, plans, and expansion; a demonstration that may very well attract top minds previously uninterested in partnering with the secretive corporation.

"The really strong people don't want to go into a closed environment where it's all secret," Bengio said. "The differentiating factors are, 'Who are you going to be working with?' 'Am I going to stay a part of the scientific community?' 'How much freedom will I have?'"

It would seem as though Apple has taken these questions to heart and adapted in kind.

"We're trying to find the best people who are excited about AI and machine learning —excited about research and thinking long term but also bringing those ideas into products that impact and delight our customers," Guestrin said.

A simulated, or "supervised", model of machine learning relates to conceptual learning; the construction of key concepts and the subsequent categories by which to 'sort' and classify them. An unsupervised model, then, is more along the lines of improvisation.

In a supervised machine learning model, "the program is "trained" on a predefined set of "training examples", which then facilitate its ability to reach an accurate conclusion when given new data," writes Nick McCrea, software engineer at Toptal.



Conversely, in an unsupervised model, “the program is given a bunch of data and must find patterns and relationships therein,” writes McCrea.

The novelty behind Apple’s proposed approach comes from the marriage of these two modes of learning.

“In recent times, synthetic images and videos have been used with greater frequency to train machine learning models,” writes Mannes. “Rather than use cost and time intensive real-world imagery, generated images are less costly, readily available and customizable. [But] it’s hard to ensure generated images meet the same quality standards as real images.”

Apple’s research team is attempting to circumvent this issue through adopting a specific unsupervised mode of learning -- generative adversarial networks, or GANS, which involve two competing neural networks. GANS pits one ‘generative’ network against one ‘discriminative’ network. Most frequently used to create photorealistic images, the generative network tries to ‘trick’ the discriminative network with sets of ‘true’ data and ‘generated’ data, while the discriminative network is responsible for validating or invalidating the ‘authenticity’ of the data sets. The end goal of this type of network is to have the generative network eventually fool the discriminative network with the generated data sets.

Imagine it this way: let’s say someone is attempting to sell an art collector a forgery. The first time around, the art collector dismisses the forgery, calling it out for being fake. But the forger is persistent; he keeps coming back with better forgeries, and eventually tricks the collector into purchasing a fake.



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## **Feb. 15, 2017**

In a press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Trump appears to back off of a two-state solution, in contrast with long-standing US policy.

## **Feb. 16, 2017**

President Trump holds his first press conference since the inauguration, continuing to call the information leaks from White House aides “fake news,” and claiming that he “inherited a mess.” Trump also slammed the press, calling reporters “dishonest.”

## **Feb. 16, 2017**

After April Ryan, a reporter of color, asks if President Trump will include the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), Trump responds, “do you want to set up the meeting? Are they friends of yours? Set up a meeting.”

## **Feb. 17, 2017**

Scott Pruitt, a longtime critic of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), is confirmed as head of the EPA.

## **Feb. 17, 2017**

In response to a Jewish reporter’s question of how the administration plans to respond to a wave of bomb threats on Jewish Community Centers nationwide, President Trump claims the question was “unfair” before telling the reporter that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called Trump a “great friend of Israel” and that the reporter should rely on that endorsement.

## **Feb. 19, 2017**

At a rally in Melbourne, FL. President Trump states, “we’ve got to keep our country safe...you look at what’s happening last night in Sweden -- Sweden, who would believe this?” suggesting that there was a terror attack related to the large amount of refugees the country took in. There hasn’t been a recent terrorism incident in Sweden.

# Rookie-level Astrology

from The Pacific Sentinel Staff.

## Aries

(March 21 - April 19)

Maybe do some yoga? Some pilates if you're into that, just don't be disappointed when there's no loser at the end of the class.

## Taurus

(April 20 - May 20)

If you check under your couch for change this month, you're bound to find enough to maybe buy some crackers, maybe.

## Gemini

(May 21 - June 20)

Stop being two faced. Text back your friends and get out of bed to take a shower you hippie, we're tired of you laying around all day.

## Cancer

(June 21 - July 22)

Time to start acting financially responsible and open a 401k. We know you don't make any money right now. Gotta save up to go to the grave though. Survive capitalism and stuff.

## Leo

(July 23 - August 22)

Stop hanging out with your significant other long enough to do the dishes. They're starting to smell, you're not the only one who uses them.

## Virgo

(August 23 - September 22)

Stop blaming your messy house on your lack of productivity. Eat a granola bar at 3am when you're done procrastinating.

## Libra

(September 23 - October 22)

You will not be any more punk this month than you were last month, and we're telling everybody.

## Scorpio

(October 23 - November 21)

Just keep doing what you're doing, no need to make any dramatic changes.



## Sagittarius

(November 22 - December 21)

Stop trying to find your wanderlust. It's wandered far, far away from you at this point and it's time to face the music.

## Capricorn

(December 22 - January 19)

What's a capricorn even? Something to do with a ram? Leave us alone, sorry we aren't as responsible as you! We're trying to help cancer right now with a 401K.

## Aquarius

(January 20 - February 18)

Visit an aquarium this month, but make sure you go with a friend, we know you've been lonely lately.

## Pisces

(February 19 - March 20)

Stop looking at your exes social media and water your plants, they're tired of listening to Drake every other day when your feelings get hurt.

### Feb. 21, 2017

After being criticized for not speaking out against anti-semitism in America, including desecration of a Jewish cemetery in St. Louis, Trump calls anti-semitic violence "horrible" and "a very sad reminder of the work that still needs to be done to root out hate."

### Feb. 22, 2017

The Trump Administration rescinds guidance originally put into place by President Obama securing the rights of transgender students to use bathrooms that match their gender identity, according to protections under Title IX.

### Feb. 24, 2017

President Trump signs an executive order directing each federal agency to identify regulations that could be reduced or cut to save money. Opponents of this action say overzealously cutting regulations would harm the environment and put citizen's safety at risk.



### Feb. 25, 2017

President Trump announces on Twitter that he will not attend the White House Correspondents Dinner. He is the first president to skip the dinner since Ronald Reagan in 1981--although Reagan was recovering from an assassination attempt. Jimmy Carter also skipped in the dinner in 1980.

### Feb. 25, 2017

Tom Perez is elected Chairman of the DNC, naming Keith Ellison as deputy chair. Trump tweets, "I could not be happier for him [Tom Perez], or for the Republican Party!"

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## **Feb. 25, 2017**

Certain media organizations are barred from attending Sean Spicer's off-camera press briefing, including *The New York Times*, *CNN*, *Politico*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. News organizations that are seen as "friendlier" to the administration, such as *Breitbart*, were allowed in.

## **Feb. 27, 2017**

In a meeting with America's governors, President Trump announced that he will propose a budget with a \$54 billion increase for defense, while cutting domestic programs. Trump has said that this is a plan that will "put America first" and sends "a message to the world...of American strength."

## **Feb. 28, 2017**

President Trump signs documents calling for review of President Obama's "Waters of the United States" rule, saying that he is moving towards eliminating it entirely.

## **Feb. 28, 2017**

Weeks after senate passed Obama's rule barring certain mentally ill people from purchasing firearms, President Trump signs a rescinding measure for the rule.

## **Feb. 28, 2017**

President Trump addresses a joint session of Congress, taking on a noticeably more optimistic and uplifting tone in contrast to his inaugural address.

## **Mar. 1, 2017**

The Justice Department reports that Attorney General Jeff Sessions spoke with Russia's United States Ambassador twice during the campaign, despite Sessions' statement during his senate confirmation hearing that he "did not have communications with the Russians." Sessions recused himself from investigations involving the Trump campaign.





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